

Old South First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



Dear Church Family,

I had an interesting conversation over the holidays – one that has prompted me to think about who we are and where we are today as Old South Church. A longtime friend of Old South observed that when she was younger, church was not really about the wider community and the congregation's interaction with it, "it was more about *us*: our worship, our fellowship, our Christian education and youth groups." She has found it interesting to see this emphasis on the community grow in ways that are rooted in our relationship with God.

It is true that for many of us today, outreach to the wider community is at least equal in importance to our emphasis on ourselves. When you look at our church and see our involvement in the new Warming Center, in the ecumenical Fuel Oil Fund and Security Deposit Fund, in the Food Pantry and our Community Lunch 9and much more), it is clear that a major part of our energy is in reaching out to those who might need a helping hand or a hug or a prayer. We talk and pray a lot about seeing the face of Christ in those around us, whoever they may be. We place great importance on our welcome. When people are attracted to Old South these days, it tends to be at least in part because of our emphasis on reflecting the love and caring and inclusive reaching out of Jesus the Christ.

I agree with my conversation partner that this emphasis is rooted in our relationship with God. And I do not think that it takes away from how we care for ourselves – rather, it *reflects* how we care for ourselves.

We continue to place a major emphasis on our youth. We choose in these tough economic times to have a youth minister to work with our Sunday School Superintendents. We choose to put energy into our Sunday School, our After School Program, our Confirmation program, Teen Faith and youth groups. We do this because we know how important our children are – and how important faith can be in their lives as they live into the call to reflect God's love in their lives.

We continue to place an emphasis on how we grow as adults: on our worship, both Word and music; on our adult programming, our Bible Study and Spiritual Formation Groups; and on our fellowship, with Retreats and Small Dinner Groups and gatherings to sing and celebrate together. We do this because we know we must be "fed" in order to "feed" others.

We continue to care for our buildings, knowing that they house our own growth as well as worthy organizations, like SAVES, that need a home.

We are, of course, a work in progress. Again and again, we ask the question of how we can reflect the love of God made known to us in Jesus more faithfully. As we come up on our Annual Meeting and a new church year, let us continue to listen carefully for the voice of the still-speaking God, whispering or shouting our next call to discipleship.

Blessings and love,

Rev. Cathie

Rev. Cathie will be away on vacation February 13-21. A big "thank you" to Stan Wheeler for leading worship on February 15th! In Rev. Cathie's absence, please call the church office with any pastoral care needs (778-0424).



**DON'T
FORGET...**

Annual Meeting, February 8th after worship!

Please bring finger foods (appetizers or food items that can be eaten without utensils!) to share. Coffee and other drinks will be available.

NOTICE

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, OF FARMINGTON, MAINE: YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that in accordance with the By-Laws of the Church, the ANNUAL MEETING thereof will be held on Sunday, February 8, 2009, immediately following the worship service –

1. To approve the 2007 Annual Minutes, taken February 10, 2008.
2. To receive annual reports and consider the same.
3. To elect officers and members of boards and committees.
4. To approve the annual budget for 2009.
5. To accept the \$250,000 JOSEPH F. HOLMAN TRUST FUND FOR THE HOLMAN PARISH HOUSE.
6. To elect members to the Fund Raising Committee.
7. To transact such other or further business that may properly come before said meeting.

Dated at Farmington, Maine, January 14, 2009.

Brenda Scribner, Clerk

Deacons' Corner

by Rev. Cathie

We are blessed at Old South to have two "members in discernment," two of our church family who have experienced a call to ministry (of one kind or another) to whom we offer our support and love as they move forward. Roy Scribner and Paula Hammerick are both attending the Maine UCC Academy for Congregational Life and Leadership, and Paula continues to take classes at Bangor Theological Seminary. Both have been leading worship here at Old South and increasingly, outside of our church.

During my sabbatical time in 2007 and my medical leave in 2008, Roy and Paula were our worship coordinators. We have continued to offer them learning opportunities within our congregation, and to receive their gifts to us with joy.

Paula is currently coordinating and helping to lead our Intergenerational Worship Celebrations (the next one is on February 1!). She is a deacon and a member of the Pastoral Care Team, thereby gaining experience in pastoral care as well as in worship. She is now preaching quite often outside of Old South, particularly at the UCC churches in Rangeley, Wilton, and Industry.

Roy began this part of his faith journey later than Paula, and is just starting to preach and lead worship outside of Old South. He is also a deacon and a member of the Pastoral Care Team, as well as offering help as needed in our budget process. This past Sunday, the Deacons discussed how to better support Roy in his call to ministry; specifically, we spoke about giving him more opportunity for preaching and leading and writing worship services. While we will continue to have other worship leaders in my absence for vacation, comp time and continuing education, you will be seeing more of Roy in the pulpit.

And here's how you, Roy and Paula's church family, can help and participate in their holy "education": you can give them honest feedback on their worship work among us. I shared with the deacons that when I was a student pastor for two years in Cresskill, New Jersey, the church really tried to teach me. There was one woman in particular, Helen, who graded me every time I preached and led worship. It was on a scale of 1-10 – I only received two or three 10s in the two years! And Helen always told me her truth about what she had heard. So I encourage us at Old South to do the same for these two members of our church family. Thanks be to God for their calls to ministry and for our call as a church to support them as they move forward!



Our Angel Fund is available to any church member who needs a financial helping hand this winter. Please contact Rev. Cathie or head deacon Ed David to access this fund.

Bible Study continues!

We will meet at Holman Parish House from 4:45-6 pm February 2nd and 9th. We take a look at the texts that Rev. Cathie will preach on the next Sunday and think about how they connect to our lives today. Join us! We will take a Lenten break and be back together starting on April 27th for another six-week session.

Lectionary for February

The Revised Common Lectionary is an ecumenical Protestant listing of passages to use for each Sunday in the church year. Reading these passages each week helps us to keep in touch with the flow of our faith. We are now in what is called "Year B," when the primary gospel that is used is Mark (Mark is the shortest gospel, so other gospels are used to fill in the story). Most weeks, Rev. Cathie also chooses her preaching passages from this resource.

For each week there is a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures, a Psalm, a reading from the Epistles or The Acts of the Apostles, and a Gospel reading. Here are the lectionary readings for February:

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, 2/1/09: Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28.

We will share Communion by Intinction.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, 2/8/09: Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39.

We will be receiving new members!

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, 2/15/09: 2 Kings 5:1-14; Psalm 30; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Mark 1:40-45. *Stan*

Wheeler will be leading worship in Rev. Cathie's absence.

Transfiguration Sunday, 2/22/09: 2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 2:2-9. *The last Sunday before Lent begins.*



Lent begins on February 25th, with our annual Ash Wednesday service!

Our worship this year will be in the sanctuary, and the choir is singing. Please join us for worship at 6:30 pm!



JUSTICE AND WITNESS

Millennium Development Goals

At the beginning of Advent, the Justice and Witness Ministry distributed a booklet, "Keeping the Promise, A Faith-Based Introduction to the Millennium Development Goals." It is our hope that folks will continue to be engaged in education about the goals and their progress. The current global economic situation threatens to alter the progress being made toward reaching these ambitious goals. If you did not receive a booklet, and would like one, please contact Sherry Jenckes or Chris Magri.

Presentation by Dr. Mike Rowland

In December, Mike Rowland gave a presentation on the migrant worker health program in Maine, followed by discussion. The presentation covered where the workers come from, their health challenges, the health program that serves them, and many other interesting details about the migrant worker system. One interesting fact: Maine now grows all of the broccoli distributed in the Eastern U.S., therefore broccoli farms are one of the major employers of migrant workers in Maine. An ongoing challenge to the migrant worker system is the lack of just and adequate immigration laws in the U.S.

Bread for the World

The 2009 Bread for the World Offering of Letters will focus on making U.S. foreign assistance more effective. Watch for more information about this. Justice and Witness will be providing Bread for the World "table tents" for use during the Lent. The triangle-fold paper tents offer weekly readings, prayers and actions to help folks observe Lent.

Movie Night

Tues. February 24, is the tentative date for a movie night, hosted by Justice and Witness. Watch for details and join us.

Justice and Witness Information Rack

Please check out the information rack in the vestry for various publications, leaflets, etc. on justice issues.

And Join Us – **Second Tuesday of each month, 7 pm, in the Newman Wing Chapel.**

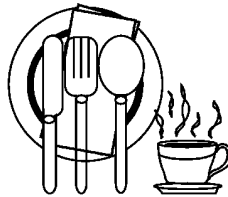


Hat and Mittens 2008

It was great to see the box for SAD 9 overflowing with hats and mittens which you so generously donated in December. The totals were 20 pairs of mittens, 2 pairs of gloves and 14 hats. These were given to school nurse Pat Mellen and will be distributed as needed.

She advised that there were no hats and mittens on hand for the school children right now so was very grateful for these gifts from Old South. Thank you to all who contributed.

Polly Howatt for the Outreach committee



Community Luncheon, January 2009

The January Community Luncheon featured a meal of meat loaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, sliced carrots, rolls/butter, and assorted cakes for dessert. We served around 130 meals (although counting is always somewhat imprecise!). At any rate, the dining room was pretty full, we had somewhere around 30 takeouts/deliveries, and about 20 workers. The key indicator was that we had JUST ENOUGH meatloaf. No one went without, and there was no leftover meat loaf. We love it when a plan comes together!

For February we will be serving a hearty Southwest Chicken Stew with cornbread and cole slaw, and brownies for dessert. This will be a new meal for us and it will be interesting to see how the stew turns out. We hope you will come join us and find out for yourself.

Look for sign up sheets to appear on the door of the kitchen. This is an important ministry of our church and could not happen without your help and support, for which we continue to be very grateful.

Stan Wheeler



The Retiree Lunch this month will be on Feb. 2 beginning at noon. This month's lunch will be a potluck. Please bring a dish to share with everyone!
Thank you.

Sunday School Classes Schedule: January- June 2009

Dear Parents,

The Old South Church Christian Education Committee has put together the Sunday School Schedule for January-June 2009 and we would like to share it with you. The Sundays when we don't have Sunday school classes we always have Activities for Children which involves a Bible story and crafts. On the 1st Sunday of the month, the

children can participate in “Sunday Kids Theater”, where Jodie Gunther facilitates an interactive Bible skit. The kids have been learning about the lives of the important people in the Bible. Intergenerational Sundays all the children Kindergarten and older stay upstairs for the Service and the Pre-K kids and under are welcome to go to the nursery. If you have any questions about the Sunday School program please talk to Rev. Cathie Wallace, Sueli Gaewsky, Amanda Hilton, or Jodie Gunther

Jan. 4th - skit

Jan. 11th – Sunday school

Jan. 18th - Sunday school

Jan 25th - Sunday school

Feb. 1st – Intergenerational Service- Jr. Choir Sings during the Service

Feb. 8th – Sunday school

Feb. 15th– Vacation – All activities for children

Feb. 22nd – Vacation – All activities for children

March 1st – Skit

March 8th – Sunday school

March 15th – Sunday school

March 22nd – Intergenerational Service- Jr. Choir Sings during the Service

March 29th Sunday school

April 5th – Skit/Palm Sunday

April 12th – Easter Sunday – No Sunday school- Jr. Choir Sings during the Service

April 19th – Vacation – All activities for children

April 26th – Vacation – All activities for children

May 3rd – Skit

May 10th – Sunday school- Jr. Choir Sings during the Service

May 17th – Sunday school

May 24th All activities for children

May 31st – Sunday school

June 7th – Intergenerational - Jr. Choir Sings during the Service

Sunday school – End of the Year Celebration!!!

Vacation Bible School – dates to be announced in the future

Attention!



Church Cancellation Info

It is that time of year again! Snow season has arrived. If for any reason snow or ice prevents us from holding worship, there will be an announcement on the answering machine and on WKTJ (if we can arrange it). If Sunday School is cancelled and worship is not, that will also be announced on the answering machine. So do call if you have any doubts!

Church Office Hours

Please note that the office will be closed on days that SAD 9 cancels school. Weather permitting, the office will be open Tuesday to Thursday, 9 to noon.

February Committee Meetings

Outreach – 2/1, after worship, Matthew Room

Deacons – Wednesday, February 4, 5:30 pm, HPH

Executive Council – 2/4, 6:30 pm, Holman Parish House

Pastoral Relations – 2/9, 10:30 am, Holman Parish House

Justice and Witness – 2/10, 7 pm, Newman Wing Chapel

Trustees – 2/17, 6 pm, Holman Parish House



Getting to Know You: Jeanne Stowe

by Rev. Cathie

Today I met with Jeanne Stowe, who is a long-time member of Old South. She was “born into the church,” and joined when she was in high school. She remembers Sunday evening “High School Club” at Old South with fondness – Nancy Connors Flick and Allan Smith were also members of this group, among others. Youth has been a focus of our energies and love at Old South for a large part of our history!

Jeanne also remembers a good-sized gathering of Congregational youth discussing the question: “Can you be a good Christian if you don’t go to church and don’t support the church?” While the group did not come up with one firm answer, there was certainly a feeling that yes, you could live the Judeo-Christian ethic without being part of a church. Sounds similar to a conversation that might happen in Teen Faith today!

Having already written the letter for this Telstar, it was fascinating to talk with Jeanne about what hasn’t changed over the years. With all of the changes inside and outside the church, with the structure of both worship and the various groups in the church becoming less formal, the “heart of Old South,” Jeanne says, has not changed. This has always been an “inclusive congregation, broad-minded and accepting of different approaches to our beliefs.”

“I remember when I was young,” Jeanne said, “being surprised when Methodist or Baptist friends would say that they had to do thus and such in a certain way in their church. I thought to myself, at our church we don’t have to do it ‘this way,’ we do it our own way!” Jeanne shared. And Old South members have always been supportive of the church and each other.

Jeanne’s parents, Mary Ella and Clifford Rounds, were members of Old South, as were her two brothers, William and Charles Rounds, who served as ushers like the other high school boys. When Jeanne and Glenn had their children, Annette, Julie and Laurie, Jeanne had them baptized at Old South, where they attended Sunday School. Two of them, Annette and Laurie, were married at Old South.

Jeanne herself was a Junior Deaconess (caring for the toddlers of the church) and sang in the choir in high school. She taught Sunday School, served as a Trustee, and was a unit leader in the Women’s Fellowship. Currently, Jeanne attends worship regularly (the place and being there “centers me,” she said), and is a part of the prayer shawl knitting group, a way to get to know other women better.

Jeanne’s great joy has been in her family. She has four grandchildren: Heidi and Kara, Annette’s daughters; and Beck and Isla, Laurie’s son and daughter.

What a joy it is to get to know some of our congregation better!

Warming Center coming to Old South!

The ecumenical Warming Center will be located at Old South during the month of March on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am-4 pm. Our leadership team includes Rev. Cathie, Sueli and Betsy Riley. Lynda Giard is serving as our food coordinator, and a number of people have already signed up to volunteer. If you would like to join them, **please pick up a form in the back of the church or just let Rev. Cathie know** (cathiewallace@aol.com, 778-0424)!

The dates that the Warming Center will be located at Old South are March 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26 and 31). Our big organizational meeting is on February 23 at 3 pm. Please join us!

Here is how the Warming Center works:

- Seniors Plus will deliver a family style meal and a dessert of fruit for people of all ages (we will give them a number ahead of time). They will also give us envelopes for each person to donate what they can (\$3 is what they would really like – but they take what they get).
- In addition, our church will solicit additional food: soup (to supplement the meal – if more people come than expected), cookies, fruit/veggies, etc.
- There will be activity boxes of puzzles, games, magazines and coloring/craft materials that will travel from church to church as the Center moves. Each church will decide on additional activities such as knitting, drumming, crafts, singing, cooking, yoga, etc. Betsy Riley has also suggested the possibility of running a help group at the

Center, if that were needed/desired.

- Rev. Susan Crane is still in conversation with Western Maine Transportation and Community Concepts about getting everyone who wants to come to the Center. We will have info soon – they are encouraging us to find additional drivers that they will train. This transportation piece is the moving target in all this – it may not actually work out perfectly this year. We will want to encourage car-pooling.
- If Seniors Plus is closed due to weather, the Center will be closed as well – we will put that info on our telephone answering machines, and on WKTJ and local TV.
- We will have a master list of potential volunteers from the university, Emergency Management and the churches. We are hoping that there will be teams comprised of all organizations.

Moving forward, will need a variety of volunteers: to be present at the Center; to organize activities; to help with food and set-up and clean-up. If you work during the day, you can also volunteer: to bring food; to come at your lunchtime and help out; to make phone calls and coordinate volunteers.



A Thought to take with you

What I Have Learned So Far

Meditation is old and honorable, so why should I
not sit, every morning of my life, on the hillside,
looking into the shining world? Because, properly
attended to, delight, as well as havoc, is suggestion.

Can one be passionate about the just, the ideal, the sublime, and the holy, and yet commit to no labor in its
cause? I don't think so.

All summations have a beginning, all effect has a
story, all kindness begins with the sown seed.
Thought buds toward radiance. The gospel of
light is the crossroads of -- indolence, or action.

Be ignited, or be gone.

~ Mary Oliver ~